

“ Who is rich? He who
rejoices in his portion
— The Talmud ”

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‘More simplicity, less warming’

The root cause of climate change today is human excess, writes MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN



within the atmosphere, which can have adverse effects on ecosystems, including causing rising sea levels, severe weather events, and droughts.

The basic reason behind this unwanted situation could be the change in people's lifestyle. Lifestyle depends upon the individual. It is not society, but an individual that adopts a particular lifestyle. Therefore, unless lifestyles change, there cannot be a change in the real situation. We often lay the entire blame on industries for carbon emissions, but the issue also concerns the individual. For example, cars account for about 15 per cent of global carbon emissions. We cannot blame the car industry for this state of affairs. If there is greater demand in the market for cars, industries will surely make more cars. It is the responsibility of individuals to use bicycles, for instance, wherever possible, or walk, or take public transport, instead of cars.

There is an old maxim, ‘Simple living, high thinking.’ I would like to make a slight change in this principle and say: ‘More simplicity, less global warming.’ Apparently, this appears to be a very difficult formula. But objective analysis of the problem tells us that there may be no other formula.

People find leading a simple lifestyle difficult. But if judged from the result, it would be clear that leading a luxurious lifestyle is far more difficult. For instance,

in earlier times when life was simple, there used to be very few diseases. But today a large amount of people's earnings is spent in recovering from various kinds of illnesses. Only very few fortunate people truly enjoy a healthy life. Therefore, it would be right to say that present lifestyles create more problems than solutions.

People are generally obsessed with having a

particular ‘life standard,’ but if they think along the lines of having a ‘health standard,’ there will be no problem at all. I do not use the air conditioner and because of this I am safe from those health problems arising from the excess use of the AC. I know a businessman in Delhi who has two cars, but he usually prefers to walk on foot. Therefore, he is enjoying good health. The in-

dividual and society are more important than projecting a certain lifestyle. If this is understood and practised, then no change will be difficult to bring into effect and the problem of global warming will eventually go away. ■

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Climate change, and its major effect, global warming, refer to the rise in surface temperatures on earth. Only after undertaking a deep analysis can we suggest those measures that are needed to cope with this problem.

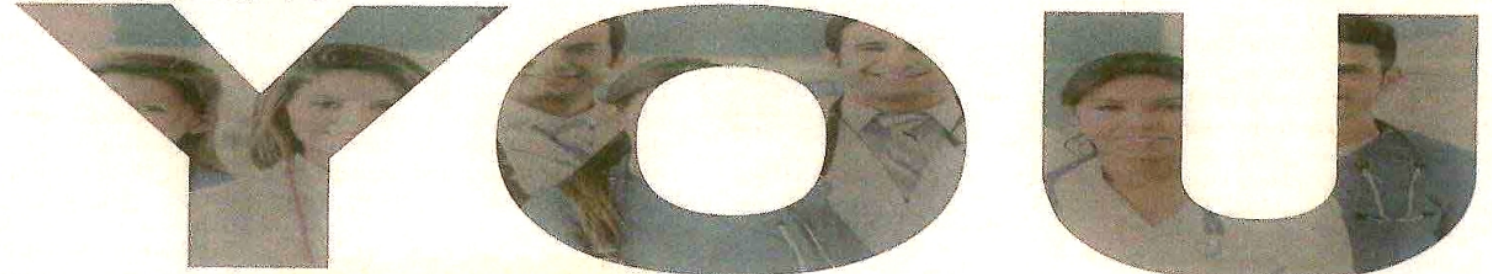
A Quranic verse says: ‘Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the evil which men's hands have done.’ (30:41) This verse is directly related to the issue of climate change. Such verses in the *Quran* refer to the laws of nature. So, the first principle that we can draw is that the problem of climate change is human-made. According to a tradition of the Prophet of Islam, a time would come when the intensity of the sun's heat would increase.

The main cause for this phenomenon is the excessive use of fossil fuels, leading to release of excessive greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat



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